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## **Operator Certification Questions**

*By Paul S. Niman*

As Board Chairman and Rule Manager for MassDEP's Operator Certification Program, I often get questions regarding operator certification issues. Frankly, there seems to be a lot of misinformation within the water supply community, so I thought it might benefit to the public water systems and its operators to share some of those questions and answers. The following are some of the questions I have recently received along with my responses:

### **Training Requirements to Sit for Exams**

The new policy establishes criteria relative to training requirements that must be completed prior to an applicant being allowed to sit for a drinking water certification exam. The new policy outlines the training requirements, exemptions, the implementation schedule, and the process for approval of training courses. Applicants for VSS, D1 and T1 exams have no new training requirements. Applicants for D2, D3 and D4 exams must satisfactorily complete the Basic Distribution Training Course prior to being allowed to sit for exams. Applicants for T2 exams must satisfactorily complete the Basic Treatment Training Course prior to being allowed to sit for exams. Applicants for the T3 and T4 exams must satisfactorily complete the Advanced Treatment Training Course prior to being allowed to sit for exams. Applicants for the T3 and T4 exams who already hold a T2 Full license do not need to complete the Basic Treatment Training, but applicants for these exams who do not hold a T2 Full license need to satisfactorily complete both the Basic and Advanced Treatment Training Courses. The Board may waive the training requirements for any exam. To request a waiver, applicants shall submit a written request to the Board that demonstrates they have sufficient training to meet the objectives of the training courses outlined in the policy.

### **Drinking Water Exams**

The new policy establishes criteria relative to the use of drinking water exams for certification. The policy outlines the approved exams, the use of sequential exams, and requirements for reciprocity. Before January 1, 2012, applicants may take any level of exam without first passing a lower level exam. On or after January 1, 2012, applicants must take all exams sequentially. This means that an applicant must pass the 1D exam before taking the Grade 2D exam; an applicant must pass the 2D exam before taking the 3D exam; etc. An exemption allows an applicant who holds an Operator-In-Training (OIT) or Full license to take the next higher level of exam without repeating a lower level exam. This means an applicant holding a 1T OIT or Full license may take the 2T exam; an applicant holding a 2T OIT or Full license may take the 3T exam; etc. An applicant holding a license in another state may be granted reciprocity in Massachusetts if the applicant's license in the other state is in good standing, the other state is a member of ABC and can verify that the applicant passed an ABC exam, and the applicant meets the education and experience requirements for the license being applied for in Massachusetts.

If you are still confused about any of these issues or if you have other questions about operator certification issues, please feel free to contact me by telephone at (617) 556-1166 or by email to [Paul.Niman@state.ma.us](mailto:Paul.Niman@state.ma.us).

